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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/015,206	11/19/2001	Jim Freid	5259-03702	7051

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EXAMINER

PHILOGENE, PEDRO

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3732

DATE MAILED: 04/17/2003

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/015,206

Applicant(s)

FREID ET AL.

Examiner

Pedro Philogene

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 19 November 2001.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 131-194 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 131-194 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 131-194 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,331,179.

Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the only difference between these two sets of claims is that in the application the head of the fastener engages the ring is omitted. Clearly, applicant is attempting to obtain broader coverage in the claims of the application. Thus, the patent claims are considered as prior art. As stated above, the only difference between the two sets of claims is that the prior art has the head of the fastener engages the ring and the claims at issue have no head of the fastener engaging the ring. The question then becomes – Does the omission of the head of the fastener engaging the ring in the application constitute an obvious expedient to one of ordinary skill in the art?

It is well settled that the omission of an element and its function is an obvious expedient if the remaining elements perform the same function as before. In re Karlson, 136 USPQ 184 (CCPA 1963).

By the use of the transitional phrase "comprising", the claims of the patent and the claims of the application both cover all of the elements of the bone stabilization system – that is, the plate, the fastener, the hole, the ring, the deflectable or movable portion. Thus, the controlling fact is that patent protection for the bone stabilization system, fully disclosed in and covered by claims of the patent, would be extended by the allowance of the claims in the application; and as already stated, nothing prevented applicant from presenting the claims in the application for examination during the prosecution of the issue patent.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 131-166, 183-188 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Olerud (5,735,853).

With respect to claims 131 and 149, Olerud discloses a plate (1) an opening (12,15) through the plate, a ring (19) positioning within the opening the ring comprising movable portion, as set forth in column 4, line 5, and a fastener (3) positionable through the ring, the fastener configured to couple the plate to bone; wherein the movable

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portion of the ring is configured to move outward to allow a portion of the fastener to be positioned in the opening, and wherein the movable portion is further configured to move inwards after insertion of a portion of the fastener to inhibit removal of the fastener from the plate; as set forth in column 4, lines 1-40.

With respect to claims 132-148, 150-165, Olerud teaches all the limitations as set forth in column 4, lines 1-67 and column 5, lines 1-67.

With respect to claims 183-188, the method steps, as set forth, would have been inherently carried out in the operation of the device, as set forth above.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

6,454,769	9-2002	Wagner et al.
5,954,722	9-1999	Bono
6,235,033	5-2001	Brace et al.
5,904,683	5-1999	Pohndorf et al
5,053,036	10-1991	Perren et al.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Pedro Philogene whose telephone number is (703) 308-2252. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Friday 6:30 AM to 4:00 PM.

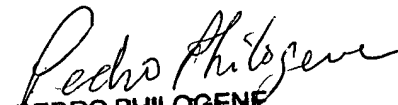
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kevin P Shaver can be reached on (703) 308-2582. The fax phone

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numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703) 872-9302 for regular communications and (703) 305-3591 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0858.

Pedro Philogene
April 15, 2003


PEDRO PHILOGENE
PRIMARY EXAMINER